

CONSTITUTION OF BLACKMAN BAPTIST CHURCH

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

As inspired by God, it is our purpose:

To lift up Jesus Christ and present Him as Savior of the world (John 3:16; Romans 10:9)

To reach out in love to the unsaved and unchurched in our community and around the world. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

To teach and preach the gospel message from God's inerrant Word, the Holy Bible (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

To seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit as we grow in Christian discipleship and commitment to Jesus Christ our Lord. (Galatians 4:6; 1 Peter 1:13-25)

ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF FAITH

OUR DOCTRINE: We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God, and as the only basis for our doctrine and beliefs. It was written by men, divinely inspired, and is the perfect record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter. It is inerrant and infallible in its original manuscript, which is to be taken as verbally inspired. (Psalms 19:7-10, 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:17-18, 22:29; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

OUR NATURE: The church is a body of born-again, baptized believers voluntarily banded together for worship, missions and evangelism. We believe that the ordinances of the church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 16:15-19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:41-42, 20:28; 1 Corinthians 11:17-29.)

OUR MISSION: In obedience to our Lord's "Great Commission", we believe that our priority is to share the good news of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible in our community and throughout the world. (Isaiah 6:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.)

Our Beliefs on Marriage

- "We believe that the term 'marriage' has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.
- "We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.
- "We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

- “We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.
- “We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.”

ARTICLE III: RELATIONSHIPS

This church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in world missions, this church voluntarily affiliates with the Concord Baptist Association, the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH COVENANT

The Blackman Baptist Church Membership Covenant

Having been brought by the grace of God to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, having been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and believing that Christ has led us to become a part of this fellowship, we now choose to renew our covenant with one another.

As members of a Christian Church...

- We will be unifying church members. We will work and pray for unity among the members of this body, choosing to love one another even as we love ourselves. We will not let the Church be about our preferences and desires.
- We will be functioning church members. We will give. We will serve. We will minister. We will study. We will evangelize. We will walk together in brotherly love, exercise affectionate care for one another, and faithfully encourage and exhort one another as occasion may require.
- We will seek to fellowship with our brothers and sisters, to build real relationships based on our shared grace in Christ.
- We will strive to bring up our children and any under our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example, to seek the salvation of our family and friends.
- We will not neglect to pray for our church as a body, its leaders, and our brothers and sisters. We will pray individually, as a family, and corporately.
- We will seek, by His grace, to live in a manner striving for holiness in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. We will constantly renew our minds to the truth that by being born again by His grace and brought into His Kingdom and being

voluntarily baptized and identified with His Church, we are to lead a new and holy life glorifying our Father in heaven.

- We will submit ourselves to the discipline of this Church as a testimony of our desire to always walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. And for our brothers and sisters, we will seek their spiritual advancement as dearly as our own.

- We will uphold and defend the doctrines of the faith against all who would come against them and, consequently, against the Word of God.

- We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the relief of the

poor and those in need, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all the nations.

- We will serve one another, using the gifts God has granted us in His sovereignty and grace. And in doing so, we will strive always to rely on the power of His Holy Spirit that all glory may be given to Him.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

ARTICLE V: BYLAWS SUBJECT TO OTHER LAWS

Purpose: Blackman Baptist Church is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Dissolution: Upon the dissolution of Blackman Baptist Church, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

Bylaws of BLACKMAN BAPTIST CHURCH of Murfreesboro shall be subject to the constitution and laws of Tennessee to the extent that local, state & national law does not violate the beliefs and/or practices of Blackman Baptist Church of Murfreesboro.

ARTICLE VI: REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS

Regular Business Meetings shall be held on the third Sunday of every month.

ARTICLE VII: SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by an elder or at the request of the deacon body. All such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such meeting, and no other matter save that specified in the call may be considered.

ARTICLE VIII: NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Meetings shall require a minimum of one week's notice unless extreme emergency renders such notice impractical. In such cases all elders must be in

agreement that notice is impractical. Notices shall be either printed, emailed, or publicly announced at a Sunday service.

ARTICLE IX: MEMBERSHIP

1. Qualifications of Membership:

A member of the church is defined as one who agrees with and will abide by the Blackman Baptist Church Membership Covenant and has met with and been recommended by the Elders. The Elders will validate the profession of faith of the candidates for membership, and verify their baptism is in accordance with the specifications for baptism as outlined in the Baptist Faith and Message. Once these qualifications have been met, the candidate for membership will be officially accepted into church membership when the congregation (2/3 majority of those present) at the next scheduled business meeting votes that they be accepted.

2. Additions to Membership:

- a. By profession of faith. Upon a credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and baptism, a person may be received into the membership of this congregation.
- b. By transfer. Members of other congregations may be received as members of this congregation when the person(s) has met with and been recommended by the Elders.

3. Termination of Membership:

- a. By death.
- b. By request of termination of membership.
- c. By church discipline. Church discipline may be exercised when a member continues in public sin, flagrant sin, false teaching or causing division within the congregation. (1 Corinthians 5:1, 9-13; Matthew 18:15-17) Church Discipline may also be exercised when a member breaks the covenant he has made with the church as outlined in the Blackman Baptist Church Covenant. Those members liable for church discipline shall be counseled by a member(s) of the Elders with a view towards reconciliation with the church. Those members refusing reconciliation shall be removed from membership when the congregation (2/3 majority of those present) at the next scheduled business meeting votes that they be removed.

ARTICLE X: ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE

Only members shall be permitted to vote at meetings of this church.

ARTICLE XI: VOTING BY PROXY

Voting by proxy is not allowed.

ARTICLE XII: QUORUM

For meetings, a quorum shall consist of 50% of Blackman Baptist Church Members.

ARTICLE XIII: CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATION SECTION I: QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:59 give clear guidance for the qualifications of elders and deacons. All Elders and Deacons shall conform to the spiritual qualifications in these passages.

While we do not think scripture mandates the following qualification, we think it wise that our elders and deacons abstain from the consumption of alcohol during the time that they serve in these capacities.

SECTION II: NOMINATION, SELECTION, AND TENURE OF ELDERS:

Elders shall be nominated by the elder body currently in the congregation and approved by the Congregation. Nomination of an elder is only to be done after much prayer and meditation upon the Word of God and informative discussion with the current members of the congregation. The nomination must also occur only after the elder body agrees in complete and total unity. The timing of the nomination of an elder is at the discretion of the current elder body and is dependent upon God raising up men to fill the office of elder. The candidate for Eldership will be appointed upon the approval of 2/3 of members present during a regular business meeting. Elders shall be ordained for life and shall serve in such capacity until death, resignation, termination of church membership, or by

conduct that violates the Scriptural qualifications of eldership as set forth in I Timothy 3:17

and Titus 1:69. Termination of elders for conduct that violates Scriptural qualifications shall be by 2/3 of members present during a regular business meeting.

SECTION III: DUTIES OF ELDERS:

The elders are the pastors, overseers, and shepherds of the church. Their main duties shall be in devoting their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine, and shepherding the congregation. In addition, the elders will oversee the ministries of the church and administer the business of the church.

SECTION IV: DUTIES OF DEACONS

Deacons perform their duties in service to God under the authority of the congregation. The deacon shall be supportive of the elders, upholding them in prayer, always seeking to strengthen and build up the body of the church. He shall not have the privilege of being contentious, but shall always be seeking to

“pour oil on troubled waters.”

SECTION V: SELECTION AND TENURE OF DEACONS

Deacons shall be elected at a regular business meeting by 2/3 of the members present. The number of potential deacons is also contingent upon the number of qualified men who are willing to serve in accordance with the said guidelines. The elder body will be responsible for presenting a ballot for deacon election to the church for use in voting at a regular business meeting. Deacons shall be ordained for life and shall serve in such capacity for one (1) year, until their task is completed, or until resignation, termination of church membership, or by conduct that violates the Scriptural qualifications of eldership as set forth in I Timothy 3:17 and Titus 1:69. Termination of deacons for conduct that violates Scriptural qualifications shall be by 2/3 of members present during a regular business meeting.

ARTICLE XIV: ORDINANCES AND ORDINATION

SECTION I: ORDINANCES

The ordinances of the church as set forth in the Holy Scriptures are baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

SECTION II: ORDINATION

Any male member of the church who by his piety, zeal and aptness to teach gives evidence that he is called of God to the work of the ministry may, by a vote of a majority of the members present and voting at any regular meeting of the church, be licensed by the church to the Christian ministry. When a member of this church who possesses spiritual qualifications for ordination to the gospel ministry has been called to serve in a church of like faith and order, that member may request ordination by this congregation. This request must come in writing and be approved by the church in a regular business meeting. Elders and deacons approved by the church shall present themselves to an ordaining council composed of ordained ministers, elders and deacons assembled and directed by the elders. This council shall perform the ceremony of ordination in the presence of the church.

ARTICLE XV: AMENDMENT

This constitution and bylaws may be amended at any regular business meeting, or at any special meeting called for that purpose, by a 2/3 vote of the members present, provided that a full reading of the proposed changes (or a printed distribution of the same) shall have been made at least one week prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE XVI: PARLIAMENTARY RULES

Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

Adopted unanimously September, 2013.
Amended unanimously on January 5, 2014.
Amended unanimously in 2016.